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ABSTRACT

This document contains four papers from a symposium on career issues in organizations. "Learning During Downsizing: Stories from the Survivors" (Sharon J. Confessore) describes a study to demonstrate that survivors of corporate downsizings undertake learning activities and use many resources to accomplish the learning tasks. "Organizational Career Planning and Development: Changes and Trends in Practice" (Brenda S. Gardner) reports on research to determine current organizational career planning and placement practices in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area and to compare and contrast results with a 1990 survey of large organizations. Its findings are that career development practices had very similar systems, but current plans centered around creating more formal and structured systems for training, mentoring, succession planning, and integration with other human resource systems. "Employee Strategies and Corporate Development--Consensus without Conflict?" (Anders Vind) considers current development in the workplace from the employee's point of view, as based on research between technicians and other white collar workers in Danish companies. "Women of Color in Corporate America: We Still Have Far to Go" (Lyn Clark Pegg) reports a study to develop a deeper understanding of the work lives of women of color in corporate settings, shedding light on the barriers and facilitators to the participants' fulfillment of their potential. (YLB)

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Career Issues in Organizations

Chair: Kevin Quinlan, University of Regina, Canada

Learning During Downsizing: Stories from the Survivors

Sharon J. Confessore, George Washington University

Organizational Career Planning & Development: Changes and Trends in Practice

Brenda S. Gardner, Xavier University

Employee Strategies and Corporate Development - Consensus Without Conflict?

Anders Vind, Roskilde University

Women of Color in Corporate America: We Still Have Far to Go

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Learning During Downsizing: Stories from the Survivors

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This study describes the types of independent learning activities undertaken by survivors of a downsizing in a Federal government agency. This study demonstrates that survivors of corporate downsizings do undertake learning activities and utilize many different resources to accomplish the learning tasks. People, formal activities and books are described as the primary resources used, and participants report that the organization is only somewhat helpful in supporting the learning activity.

Introduction

It has been estimated that over 80% of on-the-job knowledge is acquired independently, and informally (Baskett Dixon and Churchmuck, 1994), and there is substantial evidence that employees engage in self-directed learning at the jobsite (Confessore and Confessore, 1993; Foucher and Tremblay, 1993; Marsick and Watkins, 1992). Baskett and Dixon (1992) identify seven workplace characteristics that need to be accounted for when trying to understand the incidence of SDL in the workplace. These include having freedom, control and/or choice; awareness of self and others; and learning with and from others. Kops (1993), in a study of mid-level government managers, found consistent leadership, clear expectations by managers, and clear directions regarding the mission and vision of the organization as important environmental contributors to incidence of SDL at the worksite. Confessore and Confessore (1993) found that characteristics such as openness to alternatives, creativity, flexibility and a willingness to take risks, and a sense of personal efficacy were important contributors to SDL in the work environment.

Context is a key factor as to whether SDL will occur in the workplace. Ravid (1987) notes "self-directed learning does not take place in a vacuum. The character of an organization's internal work environment has long been recognized as influential" (p.5). Baskett, Dixon and Churchmuck (1994) believe that organizational culture affects the incidence of self-directed learning, chiefly because the shared values and norms contained within the culture impact individual actions, including what the individual is allowed to do. Organizations that have experienced a downsizing are described as highly chaotic environments where leadership is often in transition, organizational goals are not clear or may be conflicting, and individuals who have continued employment during and after a downsizing report feelings of sadness, a sense of betrayal, depression and even guilt (Brockner, 1992, 1985; Clark and Koonce, 1995; Noer, 1993). Self-directed learning is seen as an integral part of an organization's knowledge base, yet it is unclear what the impact of a downsizing may be on the incidence and subsequent knowledge acquisition behaviors of individuals in a post-downsized environment.

Survivors of corporate downsizings report undertaking significantly fewer self-directed learning projects and have significantly lower persistence scores for completing self-initiated learning projects than a comparison population (Confessore and Bonner, 1996). However, Fox, Mazmanian and Putnam (1989) found that individuals engage in self-directed learning activities as part of stressful, even traumatic events. This seeming contradiction raises issues for HRD professionals as they seek to understand how individuals are acquiring the knowledge they need to accomplish new tasks in new situations, and maintain productivity. This study investigates the self-directed learning activities of survivors of a downsizing in an attempt to answer 3 questions: (1) do survivors of a downsizing report self-directed learning activities, and if so, what is the

nature of these activities? (2) How do survivors describe the workplace environment, and its relationship to any learning which took place?; (3) what role, if any, do formal learning/training activities play during the transition period of the downsizing?

The Setting for the Study

This study was conducted at a Federal government agency that had begun the downsizing process nearly one year prior to the collection of data. A restructuring of the organization occurred as part of the downsizing, and at the end of the "first round" of downsizing, the organization had gone from 5 operating units to 4, with 3 units maintaining essentially the same work tasks. The fourth unit was assigned completely different tasks. There was substantial re-assignment of employees. Many experienced a change of supervisor and dramatic changes in job assignments. In some cases, employees were required to take demotions. The unit participating in this study is heavily involved in high technology work, with some satellite communication. This unit maintained its organizational mission, although some members of this group were newly assigned.

The unit had been through three waves of downsizing. These interviews were conducted 11 months after the announcement of the downsizing and restructuring, and four months after the first RIF list was posted. It was generally believed that the organization would experience at least one more downsizing event within the next six months.

Subjects and Data Collection

Thirty-two individuals who had a government service (GS) level of 11 through 15 volunteered to participate in the study. This categorization was selected because it constitutes the middle managers within the government employment structure. The individuals participated in an interview and completed two instruments, the Learning Profile Questionnaire (LPQ) and a survey instrument designed to measure locus of control. This study reports the results from the interview data.

The study used a semi-structured interview format, consisting of a series of questions modified from the Fox, Mazmanian and Putnam study of physicians' learning and change (1989). Individuals were asked to discuss the changes that had occurred as a result of the downsizing; describe the information or new skills they attempted to obtain as a result of the changes; whether the organization helped them through the learning process; and finally, if they used formal educational activities when seeking information about how to accomplish the changes they had identified. In addition, participants were asked for various demographic information, including age, length of service with the organization, educational level, and information about the various positions the individual had held within the organization.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour, and took place at the organization. As a result of reorganization activities of the previous months, approximately half of the participants were changing offices during the weeks of interviewing, creating substantial chaos. As a result, approximately half of the interviews took place in the subject's office, while the remainder took place where ever an empty, quiet place could be found. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Transcripts were subjected to a content analysis across three areas of focus: (1) the changes that occurred and the attitudes of the participants as a result of the changes; (2) the learning activities undertaken as a result of the downsizing and restructuring; and (3) the participants' perception of organizational support for their learning activities.

Results

Demographics. The population for this study are typical middle level civil servants. The mean age is 48, and the population is male and Caucasian. This group, due to the mission of the agency is highly educated, with over 85 percent possessing the Master's degree, the majority

in engineering. On average, the individuals have been employed for 16 years, having held 3 positions with the agency. The average length of time in the current position is 3 years, with the largest number of participants (12) reporting less than one year in the current position. While over two-thirds of the participants had been in their current position 3 years or less, which is not uncommon in a Federal agency, the large number of participants who had been in their current position is noteworthy, and reflects the significant numbers of individuals who experienced changing job responsibilities as a result of the downsizing and subsequent re-structuring.

Changes Reported. The changes reported by the participants were all work-focused. Some participants were given completely new job assignments, while others reported that the department's size had been reduced. Participants in this situation reported little change in their job tasks, but reported taking on bigger work-loads.

The participants who had new job assignments described their duties and the restructuring/downsizing in more positive terms than did the individuals who retained their assignments, but experienced decrease in their units. For example, one individual reported that he had lost his supervisory position, but was assigned to work that he found much more satisfying, and felt the changes in work were very positive. As one individual noted: "Under the new regime, I guess I am allowed to manage my division where I see appropriate, and where I deem necessary. So I find it refreshing, with an increase in authority and ability to get things done." Another said: "There was no longer an interest to me (where he was), although I think it was a very important work and it still continues to be. It became very routine and so I'm not all unhappy moving out of that work. I'm able to move into some areas that challenge me more and I'm happy for that." In contrast, another pointed out: "My job hasn't really changed, but my duties and responsibilities are widening. I have taken over the job that was originally handled by three gentlemen, so the workloads have gone up astronomically. I can assure you, we are not having a whole lot of fun here."

Several of the participants noted the loss of talent and the "dumbsizing" that had occurred. "We still have a lot of work to do with a lot less people. We lost a lot of really good, sharp, people" and "We lost a lot of experience" are characteristic quotes. One manager noted, "It's hard to talk to people about planning projects when they're more concerned about whether they will have a job in a month. We lost a number of young, highly productive engineers". A related topic focused on the fact that individuals had become distracted from their job tasks because they were either looking for other work to "get out ahead of the next cut," or because there was so much energy being expended on the stress of the changes. As one participant said:

It's more like I have to vie for myself, because I need to feed my family. You can understand both ways, but yet, we are all the survivors of it so far. You know, I might not be a survivor next time, so that you have those stresses. People are vying for their positions because they know another one is coming, instead of saying here are the survivors, we need to really get together as a team and try to make the most out of this, and they are not doing that. They're putting up walls instead and we are not going to deal on a level of cooperation. I have to tend to myself. It's a survival instinct.

Other individuals felt that the downsizing and restructuring was good for both the organization and their careers. Several of these individuals noted increased responsibility, the ability to get interesting assignments. One manager spoke about his junior engineers, and how upbeat they were. He noted there had not been a "negative atmosphere at all," and then added that the positive environment might be due to the fact that they were getting large amounts of new equipment, and interesting new assignments. He also felt the positive attitude might be related to the new skills they were learning, skills that made them very marketable outside of the agency. Several of the more senior personnel talked about the changes almost clinically. They described how interested they were in the process of the re-structuring, "how the components might be affected," while others described the reasons and justifications for the downsizing. It should be noted that individuals who tended to be most objective or positive about the changes

were also the more senior members of the organization; those with the least likelihood of being asked to leave the organization.

Learning Activities. The participants reported completing, on average, between 4 and 5 learning projects over the past year. While this number is well below the 7 often reported for the general population, it does demonstrate that SDL occurred. Survivors described initiating learning projects to learn new job tasks, to balance remnants of old job responsibilities with new responsibilities, or to obtain information that would make them marketable "on the outside." Taken together, participants described an environment where learning occurred almost as a matter of survival, as the primary means to obtain the information necessary to meet the new challenges.

Participants in the study identified eight different types of learning resources, with most people identifying use of more than one resource. The most frequently cited resource was people. "People" was defined as individuals within the organization who participants indicated they had sought out for information, usually as a result of being given a new assignment. The most frequently cited people resources included superiors, intra- and inter-departmental colleagues, and work groups. Other resources included books (20), formal learning activities, such as conferences and training classes, and continuous learning (both 15). Continuous learning is defined as statements where individuals described themselves as independent learners, or people who are always learning. The remaining resources include life experience (11), technology (6) and outside groups, such as professional organizations, (5).

A large number of the learning projects involved working informally with people to obtain the information they needed to complete their new work assignments. Participants in the study described several different mechanisms for interacting with people. Some reported relying on their knowledge of the organization, and their experience to determine who to call on for assistance. "I asked people that I thought would have it (information). (I would go to sources) that I already knew could possibly have this contract...I guess in my couple years on this side of the hall, I've learned who has these bits of information." Other participants talked about informal groups and meetings that served as a resource and also provided leads for obtaining information elsewhere in the agency. There were different levels of formal structure to the groups, for example, one person described a coffee klatch that got together each morning just to sit around and talk about things and "come up with ideas," while others talked about the learning they acquired as part of formal meetings. Colleagues, office mates and, interestingly, individuals who had previously held the job proved to be very helpful resources: "I've talked to people who used to...who set up the new system, the system I am now responsible for." Or, as one other individual noted: "The person in the previous position would give me some stuff. I'd take it back and work with it, then think about it and say hey, what about this, what about this? I'd see him again and pick up some more information. Sometimes I'd give him some information."

Many of the participants listed books or technical manuals as learning resources. Many of these came through the organization, but a number of people indicated that they spent "their own time" reading. "I'd rather read and look up the stuff myself. We get magazines here. And some of the guys are members so I pick up their manuals and look at them." "If you go to Borders or Crown (local bookstores), I go in those every once in awhile. I just sit there and look and see what kind of books they have. They're in all different areas, you can be selective in whatever area you're looking into."

Formal learning activities, classes, conferences, and seminars were also popular resources. Individuals described attendance at classes as being the most efficient means of obtaining information. Of all of these sources, individuals reported attendance at classes more frequently than any other activities. Many had completed management courses offered through the government, while others reported that they had completed courses in areas related to their work, such as engineering, at local universities. Several had attended conferences, either sponsored by the Government, professional organizations, or by equipment manufacturers

(especially software companies) although many noted that funds to go off-site to train had been substantially reduced as a result of the downsizing.

Some individuals described the environment as being so rich with opportunities that they "just learned what they needed to know." Closely related to this concept were the comments of several individuals who noted that they "learned it on my own." These participants described themselves as people who are "always trying to learn...whether I'm told I need to do it or not. I'm always looking for better ways of doing things." Also related to this idea of a rich environment is the role that experience played in the learning. Many of the participants talked about how they came to their new jobs with related experience, and were able to apply that to the new situation. These participants tended to describe the effect of the experience as providing a base of potential options, that made it easier for them to make decisions about the most appropriate action in an unfamiliar situation. "I'm starting from knowledge, and so I can expand on that and that saves time because I've been here for a long time, I don't have to constantly go seek out who is expert in what or who has the knowledge." Another participant: "Doing the job, just getting involved in the different aspects of project..." and finally: "...the next trip they're planning on, I am planning to go with them. So I think that's when I will start learning more about what they do, physically do, and learn some hands-on training." In each of these cases, individuals identify different types of experience which contribute to their knowledge base to accomplish their new job assignments.

There were notable differences between individuals who identified themselves as relying on people as a primary resource and those who favored structured learning activities. Generally, those individuals who identified people as important resources described themselves as "independent learners" who felt the structured learning activities were a waste of time because they were not specific enough to meet their highly specialized learning needs. Further, these participants also tended to list multiple resources such as people, books, technology and continuous learning opportunities as being all important to their learning. However, individuals who cited structured learning activities tended to identify many fewer additional resources, and, when they did, described them more as second choices.

Regardless of the differences between their learning preferences, it was obvious that individuals were engaged in learning activities. Further, there did not seem to be any relationship between the individual's attitude toward downsizing and the number of learning activities they described. Even the individual who reported "the worse thing is that I wish I could quit. I wish I could walk out and never come back." described learning activities that were highly individualized, and told about accessing several different resources that he could accomplish his job tasks.

Support for Learning Activities. This assertion is contradicted somewhat by the participants descriptions of organizational support for their learning activities. While some noted that the organization did not hinder their efforts, almost the same number noted that the best the organization was able to do was to was to not interfere. Many participants felt that resources had been cut back, and noted that some of the "one and two week seminars" had been cut. Others were more caustic in their description of the lack of support:

No one makes it easy. You have to do this for yourself. You have to learn about these conferences, you have to apply for it, you have to follow through...So it takes some personal initiative to make sure it actually happens. I don't think they are inhibiting. They may not be making it easy, they are not encouraging people.

One program, contracted by the agency to provide support for the individuals early in the downsizing effort was universally panned. The program was seen as wasteful and demeaning, and many felt that the group that had provided the training talked down to the group and treated them like they had not understanding of the impact of the downsizing. This was the only effort described as being organization-wide, and the only program which received universally poor reviews.

Another area where individuals noted lack of support was in access to the internet. While some participants had access at the jobsite, there were others who were not "qualified" to have it. Individuals described a policy where only people whose job description required work on the internet could have access to it. It was unclear as to what the standards for access were, but it was obvious that several participants felt that, while access was not absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of their job tasks, the ability to connect with others and access the resources represented by the internet would enhance their knowledge base and subsequent ability to do their jobs. A few of these individuals noted that they had "purchased" their own access on their home computer, and did use the resources as part of their learning activities.

There did not seem to be any relationship between attitude toward downsizing and perception of support for learning activities. Some individuals described the downsizing in positive terms, and noted they believed there were still learning opportunities being provided. Others who described the downsizing in negative terms also reported that the agency had failed to provide opportunities for learning. While some individuals reported the positive/positive or negative/negative relationship, there were a sufficient number of individuals whose attitude toward the downsizing was negative who reported support for their learning, as well as individuals who reported positive feelings toward the downsizing, while describing no support for the learning activities.

Summary of Findings. Individuals who have participated in a downsizing event within their organization describe an environment that is rich with individual learning activities. All participants identified learning activities, and resources to support them. The nature of these activities included highly individualized activities such as on-the job experience and reading books, to more structured and formal classes and conferences. The environment is described as somewhat supportive, although these findings are not clear. What does emerge is that there is no clear relationship between the attitude of the individual toward the downsizing and their perception of support for learning activities. Finally, it appears that while formal training and learning activities play some part in the learning activities during a downsizing, much more learning occurs as a result of informal interactions, primarily interaction with other people, i.e.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study confirms the findings of Fox, Mazmanian and Putnam (1989), who found that individuals do utilize independent learning activities during times of high stress. Further, these findings are consistent with those individuals who report high incidence of independent learning activities at the work site, but adds to this body of literature by describing individuals who are employed in often stressful, very chaotic environments. This study also provides guidance to HRD professionals as they address the needs of individuals who remain with an organization after a downsizing event has occurred, for it demonstrates that self-directed learning does occur, and suggests some practices to enhance independent learning activities.

The individuals in this study reported using many different resources, but the extensive reliance on "people resources" is key. In previous work (Confessore and Bonner, 1996), it was determined that individuals involved in a downsizing also reported decreased persistence and resourcefulness in completing learning projects. One of the speculations was that the "learning network" established by these individuals was broken as a result of the leaving of colleagues, making it difficult to obtain information necessary to do the job from the usual resources. While several individuals talked about losing talent and knowledge sources, many others demonstrated surprisingly proficiency at determining where the knowledge sources currently resided, and accessing them to learn how to get their new jobs done.

While this tends to dis-confirm the prior speculation, the fact that the union had strong influence in this downsizing must be accounted for when analyzing these results. Determination of who was to be RIF'ed was done primarily by seniority. Thus, the individuals most likely to remain with the organization were those who had known each other the longest, and who had

established very strong relationships over a large number of years. This circumstance may have contributed to the willingness of individuals to go across the organization to seek information; it may also suggest that, should more RIF's come, and the longer-term employees are dismissed, the learning resources, and, subsequently, activities may be greatly diminished.

The finding that the organization is not supportive of learning activities is not surprising, given the literature on survivors of downsizing, but it is intriguing in that it provides evidence that descriptions of survivors as unable or unwilling to be proactive in their worklife may be too extreme. These individuals demonstrated seemingly healthy knowledge seeking behaviors, and even those who expressed frustration and low morale were able to attribute some support to the organization. Furthermore, the lack of a clear pattern of low morale, no learning activities or reduced learning resources also disconfirms the description of these individuals as clinically depressed and unable to learn, as characterized by Noer (1990) and Downs (1995). For the HRD professional, it suggests that if the organization wants to begin to rebuild morale, it must organize formal learning events and provide mechanisms to support the vast amount of independent learning that is occurring within the organization.

Recommendations for Further Study

These findings are based on a very small sample size of Federal government employees. It is recommended that the work continue and address the following questions:

- a) Do survivors in the private sector display similar characteristics?
- b) Data for this study was collected soon after the first individuals left the organization. So long term survivors demonstrate these same knowledge-seeking behaviors, or does it diminish over time?
- c) The population base of survivors should be expanded to improve generalizability.

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Organizational Career Planning & Development: Changes and Trends in Practice

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The purpose of this research was to determine current organizational career planning and placement practices in the greater Cincinnati, Ohio area and to compare and contrast results with a 1990 survey of large organizations. Results which review major similarities and differences in the two groups' practices, as well as projected trends in this field, are discussed.

In the past, many career planning and development practices have fallen upon the shoulders of managers in organizations. As downsizing and re-engineering efforts have reduced the ranks of middle managers who often performed these duties, and as organizations are called upon to do more with less, the question that arises is whether organizations are instituting and/or continuing programs that allow employees to take greater responsibility for their own career management efforts, or whether career planning and development programs are themselves being reduced in number and scope.

Funded by the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management, this research was designed to determine current career planning and development practices in the greater Cincinnati, Ohio area, and to compare and contrast results with a 1990 national survey conducted in cooperation with the American Society for Training & Development and reported in the 1993 book *Organizational Career Development: Benchmarks for Building a World-Class Workforce* by Gutteridge, Leibowitz and Shore. The major questions informing this research included:

- Are companies in the greater Cincinnati area similar in organizational career planning and development practices to large companies as reported in *Organizational Career Development: Benchmarks for Building a World-Class Workforce*?
- What factors are influencing the initiation, continuation or discontinuance of organizational career development?
- What trends are being forecast for organizational career development in the greater Cincinnati area?

Methodology

A 13-page survey, which was adapted from the one reported in *Organizational Career Development: Benchmarks for Building a World-Class Workforce*, was sent in November 1995 to 630 individuals who were members of the Greater Cincinnati Human Resource Association (local chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management) and the Greater Cincinnati American Society for Training & Development (local chapter of the American Society for Training & Development). Individuals who were members of both associations only received one survey; and individual consultants and people whose organization was already receiving a survey through another individual were eliminated from the pool. Reminder letters were sent two weeks later to all individuals. One hundred twenty individuals responded to the survey. Responses were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Release 4.1.

Results

Demographics of the respondents, as compared to the results from the 1990 survey, are listed in Table 1.

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Table 1 Comparisons between 1995 and 1990 respondents		
	1995 Survey n=120	1990 Survey n=1,000
<u>Type of organization</u>		
Mfrg. (consumer)	13.4%	7.5%
Mfrg. (industrial)	21.8%	22.9%
Retail/wholesale	10.1%	4.7%
Banking, finance, ins., real estate	11.8%	24.5%
Energy (pub. util., petroleum, chemicals)	.8%	18.6%
Education/non-profit	1.7%	.4%
Government/military	3.4%	.4%
Services (bus. serv., food & hospitality, recreation, repairs)	7.6%	4.0%
Medical/health care	11.8%	2.0%
Diversified/conglomerate	0	4.3%
High tech	2.5%	5.1%
Other	14.3%	5.5%
<u>Organization's budget</u>		
Under \$25M	41.2%	2.9%
\$25-49M	11.9%	1.3%
\$50-99M	20.1%	2.9%
Over \$100	26.6%	92.9%
<u>Number of employees in organization</u>		
Fewer than 500	57.5%	4.3%
500-999	20.8%	7.1%
1,000-4,999	11.7%	35.3%
5,000-9,999	6.7%	18.0%
10,000 or more	3.3%	35.3%

As evident in Table 1, the current research's respondents are from organizations considerably more diverse in function but much smaller in budget and number of employees than the 1990 research. Their organizations' frequency and type of career development practices, therefore, reflect this much smaller size.

Of the 120 respondents to the 1995 survey, 56.9% either had or were starting an organizational career development system (OCD), defined as "a system of processes and practices designed to link an individual employee's career goals with the organization's current or future human resource needs"; 42.2% did not have one, and only .9% had one but discontinued it. This is in contrast to the 67.5% of the 1990 respondents who had an OCD or were starting one, although 30.9% did not have one, and 1.6% had discontinued theirs. Twenty-two percent of the 1995 respondents who either did not have one or discontinued it indicated that insufficient budgetary resources were their reasons, while 24% noted that insufficient support by top executives was a strong reason for not continuing or implementing an OCD. These were also the top two reasons noted by the 1990 respondents.

Table 2 shows a comparison between the surveys on various components of the OCD systems.

Table 2 Comparisons between 1995 and 1990 OCD systems		
	1995 Survey n=66	1990 Survey n=165
<u>Length of time OCD has been in place</u>		
Less than 1 year	30.3%	25.5%
One to two years	24.2%	20.6%
Three to four years	13.6%	16.4%
Five to six years	1.5%	12.7%
More than six years	30.3%	24.8%
<u>Responsibility for OCD</u>		
Centralized	29.0%	37.5%
Decentralized	17.4%	10.2%
Both	53.6%	52.3%
<u>HR staff working full-time on OCD</u>		
None	66.7%	54.1%
One	18.1%	21.0%
Two	2.8%	9.4%
Three or four	9.7%	5.5%
Five or more	2.8%	9.9%
<u>FTE HR staff working on OCD</u>		
None	46.1%	NA
One	23.7%	NA
Two	11.8%	NA
Three or four	11.8%	NA
Five or more	6.6%	NA

Surprisingly, results from both surveys were similar in the top factors that influenced the development of their organization's career development and planning system: Desire to develop or promote from within was the #1 factor for both sets of respondents (14.5% for 1995 survey, 23.0% for 1990), while development of the organization's strategic plan was #2 for 1995 (12.6%) and #4 for 1990 (12.1%). The other two factors were shortage of promotable talent (11.6% for 1995 and 13.8% for 1990), and organizational commitment to career development (11.4% for 1995 and 12.6% for 1990). Two factors that were expected to be higher in the rankings were desire to motivate employees under conditions of limited organizational growth (#9 at 5.9% for 1995 and #5 at 8.0% for 1990), as well as desire to improve worker productivity (#6 at 9.3% for 1995 and #13 at 1.7% for 1990).

Table 3 shows selected career development practices and their frequency in both the 1995 and 1990 surveys.

Table 3
Career development and planning practices' frequency

	1995 Survey n=66	1990 Survey n=165
Career planning workshops	23.0%	34.3%
Promotability forecasts	31.5%	45.7%
Psychological testing	30.6%	33.7%
Assessment centers	14.1%	14.0%
Career information handbooks	12.2%	18.9%
Career resource center	6.9%	19.5%
Supervisor or line mgr. counseling/career discussions	79.5%	83.0%
Personnel/HR staff counseling/career discussions	71.6%	82.5%
Job posting	82.7%	83.1%
Skills inventories/audits	38.9%	36.9%
Replacement or succession planning	51.4%	65.3%
Internal placement systems	40.6%	55.5%
Job enrichment/job redesign	44.4%	40.6%
Job rotation	37.7%	54.0%
In-house training & development programs	86.7%	91.6%
External seminars or workshops	81.3%	91.0%
Tuition reimbursement	88.3%	95.0%
On-the-job training	96.1%	NA
Cross-functional team training	60.0%	NA
Supervisor training in career discussions	37.0%	44.1%
Mentoring systems	37.5%	20.9%
Employee orientation programs	85.1%	86.1%

As seen above, the more traditional practices such as job posting, in-house and external training, tuition reimbursement, employee orientation, and supervisor or line manager or human resource staff counseling/career discussions continue to be the most prevalent activities in organizational career development systems.

Not surprisingly, both surveys found that little formal evaluation of career development systems or practices occur; only 15% of the 1995 respondents use questionnaires to measure attitudes, learning or behavior, while 32.7% of the 1990 survey respondents utilized this method of evaluation. Informal feedback from participants continue to be the most widely used method of evaluation, with 41.7% of the 1995 respondents and 63.7% of the 1990 respondents gathering data this way. However, 10% of the 1995 and 11.7% of the 1990 respondents analyzed data on productivity, performance and costs to evaluate their career development practices. Given the low staffing levels in career development, especially in smaller organizations, these figures could be considered a healthy trend toward more "bottom-line" evaluation.

Along with evaluation practices, much attention has been focused in recent years toward understanding and promoting linkages between the various human resource systems in organizations. Questions regarding whether selected human resource systems are part of an organization's practices and whether they are linked to career development yielded the following results in Table 4.

Table 4
Selected human resource systems frequency and linkages to career development

	Have system		Linked to career development	
	1995 n=66	1990 n=178	1995 n=66	1990 n=178
Performance appraisal	97.4%	97.2%	74.7%	82.9%
Recruitment practices	82.1%	97.8%	46.0%	49.2%
Promotion & transfer practices	84.6%	99.5%	80.9%	82.6%
Job description or evaluation	89.7%	97.3%	58.6%	48.6%
Human resource planning	75.3%	75.6%	61.5%	70.0%
Training & dev. systems	84.4%	NA	83.3%	NA
Org'l strategic planning	73.1%	84.8%	55.6%	46.5%
Individual development planning	66.7%	NA	80.6%	NA
Formal mentoring programs	20.5%	NA	27.0%	NA
Mgt./technical career tracks	43.4%	NA	56.0%	44.0%
Cross-training	64.9%	NA	62.7%	NA

Although the differences in size of organization between the 1995 and 1990 surveys would lead one to expect differences in the types of systems they possess and how the systems interact with career development, Table 4 shows very similar results between the two groups.

Discussion

Even though many large and small organizations have or are undergoing major changes in their workforce and in their style of operations (49.2% of the 1995 respondents' organizations have had layoffs in the past five years and 78.2% of them have undergone re-organization in the past five years), their career development practices seem to be in line with the 1990 survey of large organizations. If, as Mark Twain felt, Cincinnati is about 5 years behind the rest of the nation, perhaps this similarity with national large organizations can be explained as "catch up," or perhaps it is an indication that smaller organizations such as those reflected in the 1995 survey are becoming more proactive in their approach to career development for their employees and organizations.

Interestingly, responses to the question regarding the 1995 organizations' plans for career development practices centered around creating more formal and structured systems for training, mentoring, succession planning and integration with other human resource systems. A number of respondents indicated that if they had to design their system over again, concentrating their efforts and being sure that they were tied directly into other human resource systems would be some of their top revisions. Consistent with the need for human resource departments in general to align themselves more with the business of their companies, this research would indicate that career development staff need to be more aggressive in partnering with other functions in their organizations, as well as developing a more enhanced strategic focus to their plans and activities.

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Employee Strategies and Corporate Development - Consensus without Conflict?

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Will new HRM strategies for learning organisations, less hierarchy and bureaucracy, and more emphasis on the knowledge base of the company mean a "natural enrollment" of the individuals' needs and strategies for better work - or will conflicts between management and employees arise at a higher level? Based on research between technicians and other white collar workers in Danish companies this paper tries to understand current development in the workplace from the employee's point of view.

The Danish labour market has a long tradition of a very widespread use of postgraduate and continuous vocational training in companies. This tradition is based upon at least four elements in the structure of the Danish labour market. In a very summarized form we could describe it like this: Danish management has a comparatively "soft" understanding of HRM build on - among other things - the fact that Danish companies are small and historical very "patronical". In recent years the business schools have been involved in the development and distribution of many new tools for planning training and education, in change projects based on notions like the learning organization, etc.

Danish trade unions have a long tradition for seeing education and training as one of their primary tools for securing their members in the workplace and to secure better wages. The traditional division between skilled and unskilled workers has clearly proved that education is a mayor factor when it comes to possibilities in working life regarding wages, job security, etc.

Politically the field of continuing vocational training and postgraduate education has been a cornerstone in the social partnership between employers trade unions and the (historically very often socialdemocratic) state. This has resulted in a very huge public funding of continuing vocational training and postgraduate education. - and this has been a growing sector over the last decade or so.

Finally education has always been a key element in overall political development in Denmark. Due to the lack of natural resources there has been a general understanding among all political parties that education has to be central to Danish economic development.

All this ends in a situation where there is a very broad acceptance of the necessity of workplace development, of enough public funding and general agreement between unions and managers about the use of training and education. Nevertheless, in the companies still more managers and employees ask:

If continuous vocational training is the answer - what was the question? Employees don't feel that their lives are getting that much better due to the training activities and the company doesn't get the increase in productivity it were looking forward to. This paper tries to give some parts of the answer to the question: Why are there still all the troubles with human resource development - even when the setting (that means: management acceptance, lots of money, agreements, etc.) seems ok? I will summarize some answers that my research has come up with - and that are answers mainly concerned with how the employees experience development processes, how they react and how that influences the process and the result.

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Theoretical Approaches to Understanding Contemporary Human Resource Development

The theoretical foundation of the HRD field draws upon several disciplines with organizational development (OD) and Training and development as major components (Swansson 1995). In this project there has been an attempt to go into a deeper discussion in three specific areas of the theoretical complex that is the HRD basis. It's theoretical concepts that go across the classical distinctions between for instance "organisation - groups - individual" and "organisation - process - individual".

Organization as a framework for HRD. There are several competing theories about OD - with more or less interest for The HRD field. I have aimed this project at providing tools for the cooperation in companies between management and employees (see Vind 1995a) and therefore it has been a priority to find theories that could grasp this process of daily cooperation, bargaining and negotiation in the broadest sense.

This has lead to the view of organizations as micro-political arenas where different agents carry their different strategies and opinions forward. In a German study they have structured this by Giddens theory of structuration (Giddens 1984) and applied it to company relations in this model:

Analytical search dimension/structural level Domination				
Structure	Signification	Legitimation	Domination	
The form of Rules and Resources	Rules of the constitution of mind	Rules of sanctions of action	Authoritative-administrative resources	Allocative resources

Modality	Interpretative scheme	Norm	Authoritative-administrative power	Economic and technical power
Exemplars of modalities	Interpretation patterns	Juridical norms	Work organisation	Money
	Organisational language	Organizational norms	Administration	Investment budgets
	Ideals		Instruments for planning	Raw materials Technics

Dimensions of micropolitical action	Communicative action	Sanctions action	Authoritative Administrative action	Business economy and technical action
Analytical search dimension/level of actions Power/Micropolitics				

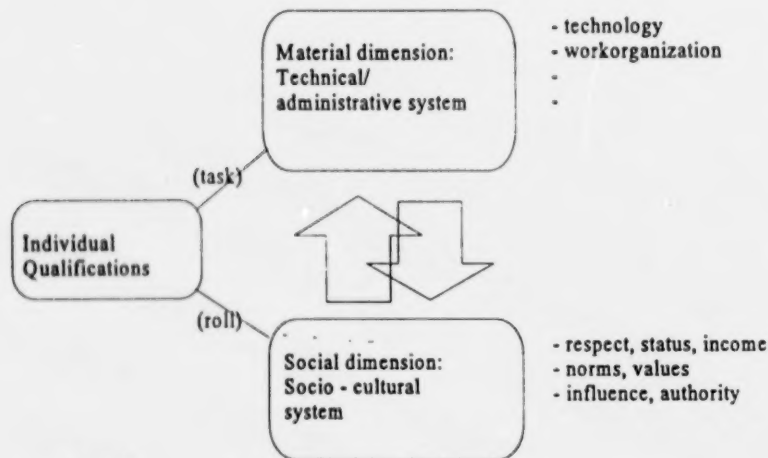
(modified from Ortmann 1995)

This model is used for analytical distinction of different areas of interaction/communication between the actors in the company setting and the different types of logic within this areas. To some extend this model can be clarifying to the terms of power and power relations as mayor factors in modern labour relations in the workplace (Jermier, Knights and Nord 1994).

HRD Strategy: Development of new qualifications. The second area of HRD theories has to do with the training and learning component of HRD. As a basis of designing training and learning programs there has to be developed a clear link between organizational development, the demands for new qualifications and the design of the learning processes.

Over the last decade there has been an increasing understanding of the very complex nature of the changes in the demands for new qualifications. Very deterministic or mechanistic points of view where people try to make forecasts about future qualifications based on f.i. the development within technology. This has proved to be ineffcient in this regard.

There are of course very big differences whether you look into a specific company and it's specific development or if you want to look at qualifications on an aggregated level within specific sectors or the like. But fundamentally some of the difficulties arise from the complex of both a material side and a socio-cultural side of the qualifications:



(modified model from Soderstrom 1996)

Furthermore - when we have an idea of how new demands for qualification arise - there are three possible strategies for companies:

- 1) they can try to minimize the demands for qualifications (automatisation, etc.),
- 2) they can recruit new personnel from the external labour market and
- 3) they can go for internal qualification of the existing employees.

Due to a variety of circumstances (technology development, demographics, etc.) the most common strategy - also in the case companies in this study - the third strategy (Pawlowsky, 1992).

Individuals as human resources. I think that we never must forget that the individual employee is the subject in the learning process in organizations - and not only the object for the purposes of the organization. In this field it's a discussion about how to understand the relations between qualifications, individual competency and learning organisations, and between human resource management and individual strategies of the employees.

The question of the subject - and subjectivity - and the relation between subject and the social settings draws upon a long history of theoretical controversies and different approaches within several academic fields. (Casey 1995) The fundamental points of view in this study could be put into three short statements:

- the subjectivity will always be realised and developed through social interaction and be influenced by/influence this social settings
- the subjects response and actions in specific settings will be based not only on the actual situation in the specific context but will also be based on the individual biography - the specific psychological structure given by the specific development of that individual (Salling Olesen 1996).
- a central aspect of the constitution of subjectivity in an organizational setting will be the definition and the use of symbols and symbolic interaction.

How can we do Research on these three aspects of current HRD Practices in Companies?

The projects has included an attempt to operationalise these theoretical issues into a structure that could give answers at an empirical level. This has lead to a quite simple basic structure - divided into four separate "layers" in the case companies:

General developments which the company has to respond to. There is a wide range of external factors that defines the room for company decisions. These factors are within the whole spectre of company relations with the environment - market development, technology, available workforce, training possibilities, etc.. To understand the internal, micropolitical world we have to have at least a generalized understanding of these relations between the company and its surroundings.

Management strategies towards the general and specific developments. Founded in the perception of the external developments as well as interpretation of internal factors management forms a strategy (the level of verbalisation or even consciousness of this strategy is not the main issue here) and takes action according to this strategy. It's off course a main research question to extract the structure or the "logic" (which actually very seldom is basically logic or rationalistic).

The actual forms of cooperation in the company. Managements strategy and action most often is the mayor structure (that is the meaning of management) of how the cooperation between management and employees are formed in the specific setting. The study of this cooperation comprises both formal structures within company HRM (incentives, wage structures, formal cooperation at different levels, etc.) and informal features (culture, myths, etc.).

In a little more specific formulation it means: How do different personal/employee strategies emerge, develop and interfere with the organizations/management strategies? How are these change processes in the companies happening in practice? How do the different agents (management, employees, and partially some external agents (unions, etc.) behave?

Responses from the Employees In the HRD we have a broad knowledge of the reasons for the organizations to search for new capacities, new knowledge, new forms of organization, etc. and often also what types of management strategies that this is formed into - but we have very little knowledge about the structure and the content of the reasoning, reflexion by the individual employee and the "individual strategies" this is formed into (Heisig and Littek 1995). Why do employees act the way they do and what are the consequences?

Following this I find it interesting to see how these different strategies interact in the actual practice in the workplace - how can these strategies from management and from employees support each other, when do they become contradictory, etc.?

This has been the structure of the analyses of the cases study - which is conducted according to traditional case study methodology (see Vind 1995a). Even though the project isn't finished yet, we can look at some of the preliminary findings at the four different levels:

"We still know what it's all about - so why make plans which management will change tomorrow?"

Divided into the above-described four levels I will in brief give some idea of what the findings in the project are. Bear in mind that this project deals with only one part of the labour force - white-collar workers - especially technicians - within industry. The finding would in some aspect be different even in the same companies if we had looked at other grouping - or if we have looked into other business sectors.

General developments which the company has to respond to. I won't go into details with this in this presentation, but the project has identified several general developments which have to be taken into account when you look at this specific groups of employees in Danish industry. In all the cases - and in the broader survey that was carried out - it was evident that for instance

Internationalisation, has become not only a question about new markets for products but a much more comprehensive feature, where many companies now are part of an international structure (as part of a larger concern, due to strategic alliances, etc.). This means a much deeper cross-national cooperation at new levels in the companies, so technicians in planning, in requisition, etc. now has to be able to act in an international setting

Technology is still in the progress of creating new possibilities for cross-divisional information structures in companies. This means for instance that economic aspects of product development can be/has to be taken into account also in the technical departments and this means new demands for economical understanding even by the technical staff.

Project management as a new way to organize work in the technical departments is a very widespread strategy and this also affects the demands for new general qualifications among technicians.

This is examples of areas where the white-collar workers - especially technicians - have to meet new and increasing demands for qualifications.

Management strategies towards the general and specific developments. Even though the individual company has to react to this general development in their own specific way, there are also some common trends in the actual management strategies in the studied companies:

A lack of continuity in top management strategies is a very common aspect. Due to the general turbulence - acquisitions, merger, new ownership, etc. - there is a big exchange of top-management in the companies - and also to some extent in middle management. This means that new ideas, new strategies are introduced in the organization with the effect that the different levels of management very often don't have the same strategy and that the organization as such can lose the engagement in the new ideas - "we've tried too much too often".

Too little knowledge and too much uncertainty about the outcome, the performance linked to different types of HRD-strategies contributes to the general unstable situation of the actual HRD-strategy in the companies.

The actual forms of cooperation in the company. The above mentioned problems for management in regard to creating a long-term viable HRD-strategy of course influence the actual use of HRM tools and the ways that the cooperation between management and employees are carried out in the companies. Some of the results are

Use of tools without effect. A lot of companies have started using new tools in the HRM field. All the companies in this study have or had a plan for starting procedures for "development talks" between all managers and the individual employee they are managers for. A central aspect of these talks are the planning of the individuals participation in different kinds of education and training.

Contradictions within HRM. It has also been a common feature in the studied companies that there is not one single HRM-strategy in the companies. There are contradictory policies within the company - you might have a very broad competence for decision making within the product or the project you are working with - but you might have a very limited influence on the working hours.

A search for a "holistic approach" to change projects. The actual change projects have to be seen in their specific context - and you have to have all aspects into account. It's not possible to have technology-projects as such - there will always be a range of questions in connection to organization of work, personal relations, new routines, etc.

The need for new approaches to postgraduate training, continuous vocational training and training activities as such. This means for instance the need for increased flexibility in education and understanding of training and development - instead of a relatively stable and conservative understanding of training and education as something you go to for a week at some public educational institution (an understanding that is very heavily supported by the fact that this is the easiest form to control when you have public funding).

Responses from the employees. The actual responses - and the ways that employees interpret this things - has to be seen in the light of the overall process of modernization of the modes of production. Individualization, Career planning, engagement, etc. changes the ways employees relates to their workplace. In short this means that you can't expect to see the traditional forms of conflicts or employee resistance in these actual processes. But you find reactions - both at the individual level and also problems at the organizational level:

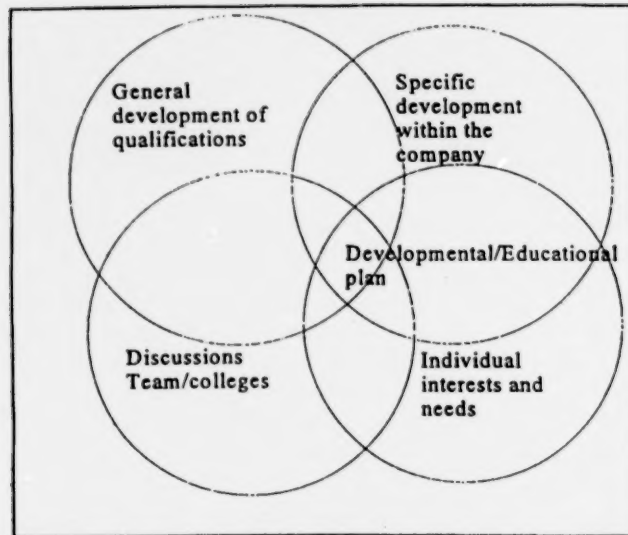
New problems for management. Strifes and other open conflicts are almost non-existent in this white-collar areas of companies - but problems appear in different spheres. Typically the management will experience problems with employees leaving the company, departments that are not functioning very well, feelings/cultures of mistrust and low engagement spreading all over the company, etc. This will be the way individuals that don't feel they have a good job will express their feelings.

The lack of real workplace democracy. If you want the employees to have a real commitment - and you want to have a real synergy between the individual and the organization, there is a need for increased democratization of the companies. Too much of the companies long-term strategies are embedded only in top-management and if you need a long-term strategy and a long-term commitment from the organization - you have to engage all employees in a much more comprehensive way.

Proposals for Action

The project behind this paper is a practical, action-oriented one - aimed at being able to give advice to unions, companies, employees. This has lead to three main proposals in the actual Danish context:

A new understanding of development strategies for employees - valuing the employees as individuals more than a certain "task-holder". In the practical HRM-tools there still are a conception of a very linear planning of the individual development in companies - based on a one-dimensional way of looking at the companies future needs for qualifications based primarily on the companys strategic plans for markets, technology, etc. . Instead of this we have started the development of a individual based planning model that takes four different element into account in the planning:



The model describes four sources to input to the individual plan:

- the general development of qualification (as mentioned in this case internationalization, etc.)
- the specific developments within the company (could be specific investments in IT)
- the cooperation within a team or a department (who wants to do what in the future)
- and finally the individuals own needs and ideas of the future.

Democratization of the Companies. The case studies have shown that a better usage of HRD, personal engagement and competency building in companies have to be linked to a democratization of companies. We don't have any final models for this, but in a Danish context it is interesting that this aspect has rarely been discussed the last 20 years - since some very ideological discussions in the early 70ies. In the meanwhile unions and other institutional investors have become much more influential (compared with traditional owner-steps) and on the other hand management trends are focusing on increasing the engagement and the closer links between the employee and the company.

It must be time to discuss how we in general develop models that incorporate both financial/economic democratization as well as a democratization of the actual management.

New Role for the Trade Unions. Both the above mentioned proposals lead to very severe changes in the future role of trade unions. On the one hand they have to recognise and support some very individual projects in the workplaces - accept and support that not all members have the same needs and the same wishes for the future but need differentiated support. On the other hand unions have to engage in the discussion of democratization - even though it means that they have to support or engage in taking responsibility in companies and therefore leave traditional class-oriented notions of "us" - the employees - and "they" - the managers.

Management is too important to leave to the managers!

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Women of Color in Corporate America: We Still Have Far to Go

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The purpose of this interpretive study was to listen to the voices of women of color, and to reflect with them on the meanings of their experiences within their work settings. Their perspectives offer candid information about the barriers and facilitators to their full participation. Corporations can discern what steps they can take to engage the full potential of their present and future workforce.

Work place diversity is a business issue. The United States workforce is becoming more diverse, and companies face the challenges of meeting the needs of all their employees and resolving culturally induced organizational problems. Technological innovations and global competition necessitate the full utilization of skills of all employees so that maximum efficiency, quality, and customer service may be attained. There could be significant organizational liabilities from maintaining homogeneity and ignoring the diversity of employees: low employee morale, high absenteeism and turnover, lack of innovation, lower productivity, and a limit to recruitment and the size of the potential labor pool. No longer can businesses maintain a homogeneous view of their employee or assume that they will assimilate or leave. No longer can businesses afford not to tap the potential of their entire workforce. (Copeland, 1988; Cox, 1991; Fernandez, 1991; Thomas, 1991; Wilcox, 1991; Winterle, 1992; Wright, Ferris, Hiller, and Kroll, 1995).

The transformation to a multicultural environment requires strong executive leadership, a shift towards a pluralistic philosophy, and a long-term commitment to change. Organizations with a racially and ethnically diverse workforce quickly realize that physical proximity and good intentions will not necessarily result in a successful transition towards multiculturalism. Employees from the dominant group are faced with the need to alter their awarenesses and attitudes and to give up privileges; employees of color are challenged to move out of their isolation and to take risks. These interactions can lead to employee frustration, incidences of interpersonal conflict, and the potential of permanent racial divisiveness. Because of the complexity of the issues related to diversity, change must occur on the individual, group, and organizational levels (Gardenswartz and Rowe, 1994; Jamieson and O'Mara, 1991; Loden and Rosener, 1991; Thiederman, 1991).

The Research Process

The interpretive, hermeneutic research methodology, using the case study approach, provided the medium to uncover the realities of the work experiences of women of color. The research question was: "What are the meanings of the lived experiences of women of color within American corporate workplaces?" This study explored the specific issues women of color face within their work settings, and how the quality of their work lives was affected by their daily experiences.

The study involved eleven participants who were self-described as being a "woman of color" working in corporate settings. They were in positions ranging from direct customer services to management. Their identified heritages included the following racioethnic groups: African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic, and Native American.

The core of the learning from this study was found in the in-depth descriptions of the women's daily experiences, provided by the participants themselves. The participants agreed to journal over a period of one to two months. Their written reflections were followed up with conversational interviews, in which the significance and meanings of those experiences were explored, other issues were discussed, and background information was collected.

Each participant's written and spoken words were analyzed both thematically and existentially to determine their psychodynamic and professional issues. The resultant case studies

summarized each participant's origins and formative experiences, her vocational history and career path, and her emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses to the work environment.

The vocational experiences contained within the case studies were analyzed both individually and collectively, resulting in a second level of interpretation. Specifically, the case studies were re-examined to determine what professional issues predominated and were shared in common. Three primary themes emerged from that meta-analysis, which identified areas of concern and professional importance to the participants. The participants' work experiences were evaluated further, utilizing a five-point continuum to define their states of existence, from exclusion to appreciation.

Summary of Participant Characteristics

Participant	Race/ Ethnicity	Age	Position	# years in company	Psychodynamic Scripts	Professional Issues
Alexandra	Native- American	28 yrs.	Research Chemist	5 yrs.	Relationships Achievement	Mgmt support Stereotyping
April	African- American	52 yrs.	Human Resources	22 yrs.	Faith	Human relations Mgmt support Stereotyping
Asa	African- American	43 yrs.	Human Resources	15 yrs.	Feeling different	Communications Integrity
Beverly	African- American	25 yrs.	Customer Relations	8 yrs.	Security Achievement	Prejudice Mgmt support
Emily	Asian- American	28 yrs.	Executive Assistant	8 yrs.	Learning, growth Family	Mgmt support Wk/fam balance
Frances	Native- American	45 yrs.	Accounting	10 yrs.	Family Community	Human relations Wk/community Stereotyping
Lee	African- American	37 yrs.	Community Development	15 yrs.	Relationships	Prejudice Human Relations Mgmt support
Mary	African- American	47 yrs.	Sales and Marketing	8 yrs.	Hard work is rewarded	Stereotyping Recognition
Nan	African- American Hispanic	35 yrs.	Human Resources	12 yrs.	Family	Mgmt support Communications Wk/fam balance
Stephanie	Hispanic	35 yrs.	Community Development	7 yrs.	Family Relationships	Mgmt support Stereotyping
Sumiko	Asian- American	46 yrs.	Accounting	5 yrs.	Personal vulnerability	Stereotyping Human relations Mgmt support

The Predominant Themes

Three professional issues emerged from the case studies, which encompass the participants' experiences on the individual, group, and organizational levels. Those issues form themes which relate specifically to the participants' ability to be engaged fully in their work and to perform at their optimum level.

Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination The participants described numerous experiences in which they felt prejudged by their co-workers, because of such attributes as their racioethnic identification, gender, and age. Those stereotypic labels were limiting and often derogatory. They were barriers to the participants' inclusion within the work environment. One participant expressed her discouragement:

No matter how hard you try and how much you prove yourself . . . they still look at you and see 'black' . . . Because you are a person of color, you are inferior. (Lee)

The participants often felt that they were expected to represent an entire racioethnic group and to provide expertise related to that affiliation. Other aspects about their personality and capabilities were ignored or minimized. This participant's frustration was shared by others:

Because of my racial background it was assumed that I could provide the most expert opinion. It appeared the decision base on race and not on the basis of expertise. (Stephanie)

Stereotyping caused the women of color to feel that they did not fit the corporate image and were outside the norm to achieve success. One participant voiced her discouragement:

I think people . . . are very willing to accept you if you have their values, their morals, and you look at the world the way they do . . . Corporate America does not respond to people who do not fit the mold. So therefore, if you don't fit the mold, you are not going to get promoted. (Mary)

Affirmative action was discussed as both a positive and negative force on conditions of persons of color in the workplace. The participants appreciated the opportunities that affirmative action policies provided, but they felt the stigma of being members of "protected" groups. Persons of color were perceived to have received preferential treatment, therefore, they were assumed to be unqualified. As a result, the participants felt that they had to prove their capabilities, in order to overcome negative stereotyping and prejudicial assumptions. The comments of two participants expressed the challenges they faced as women of color:

You have to prove yourself, over and over. You have to give 110%, [and] you are already doing your best. You do the best you can, but you're constantly under a microscope. (Nan)
Gaining respect requires a lot of work -- and for a person of color it requires ten times the work . . . I think you are held to a tougher and higher standard. (Stephanie)

Interpersonal-Intergroup Issues The participants' relationships within the work group had a significant effect on their ability to focus on their jobs, their enthusiasm for work, and their commitment to the organization. The dynamics of the interpersonal and intergroup relations had the potential of being either barriers or facilitators to the participants' work performance.

The participants' ability to function fully within their work groups appeared to be determined by the treatment they received from their co-workers. Everyday interactions were important signals to one participant, influencing her feelings of safety and security:

After this day it really put my relationship with my peers in perspective. I guess I had an idea of how most whites felt about us as black people, but this really hit home . . . This really showed me how polarized we are and that prejudice still prevails . . . So you tend not to let your guard down, so you're always on guard. (Lee)

Her co-workers overt exclusion directly affected this participant's investment in her work:

I felt a real challenge to integrate and to move again to the circle . . . You keep going in, and they push you out . . . I did get frustrated, and then I resigned to the decision . . . that I'm not going to engage. I'm just not going to participate. I'm not going to put myself in that position again. (Asa)

The participants also reported positive experiences in which communications were direct and open, and relationships were supportive and respectful. This participant expressed her view on the importance of human relations:

I know that if we don't get to the human side we won't accomplish what we want to do on the corporate side The people part plays such an important role. How do we feel? Do we like coming to our jobs? Do we feel important? Do people seek out our opinions? (Sumiko)

The shift from being simply accepted to being fully appreciated was dramatic for some of the participants. At that point they felt fully included, secure in the knowledge that their contributions to the organization were valued. One participant articulated her experience of being respected:

[Respect is to] value this person's opinion, really listen, probably really think that the person had something to contribute . . . that will benefit the organization. (Emily)

Management Support The participants' need for the support of management was evident throughout the case studies. Their feelings of vulnerability as women of color were mitigated by their supervisors' attitudes and managerial skills. Their supervisors' abilities to facilitate open communications, to mediate conflicts, and to ensure fairness affected the participants' ability to concentrate on their work and to fulfill their potential. These participants expressed the negative effects on their work performance:

I feel an added stress, because I know management is looking at me through a microscope. They are waiting for me to fail It affects my day to day productivity. How can I not worry? (Nan)

It's hard to concentrate and be productive because I'm not being supported. (April)

It makes a tremendous amount of difference, because I've seen cases where some person does not have the support of their supervisor and . . . every day it's a constant challenge. They are not getting some of the basic things that they need to do their job. (Stephanie)

The visible support of upper management was integral to the participants' sense of safety. The participants were appreciative of the direct and indirect efforts by management to facilitate their inclusion and professional development. They spoke positively about corporate support for work and family balance, positive role models and mentoring, and cultural pluralism:

I worked for a woman manager and we had a good working relationship over the years. We helped each other out to balance that work and home thing. (Nan)

When I first got into supervision, I worked under two wonderful people. They taught me what I needed to know to be a good supervisor. They also taught me what to watch out for in the system. That meant a lot to me because I was the first black supervisor in the company and my mentors were white. I felt they appreciated me. (April)

States of Existence

The purpose of the study was to develop a deeper understanding of the worklives of women of color in corporate settings, shedding light on the barriers and facilitators to the participants' fulfillment of their potential. A framework was designed, utilizing conceptual models developed by Roosevelt (1996) and K. J. Millhone (personal communication, November, 1996). Each position on the five-point continuum describes the relationships within the work group, as well as the organizational response to employee differences. The psychological impact of the participants' work experiences was evaluated within the context of these five states.

Exclusion Within the state of exclusion individual differences are disliked, avoided, and rejected. Harassing and hostile behaviors by co-workers and management are directed at persons of color. They may be told directly or by innuendo that the only reason they were hired or promoted was to comply with affirmative action policy. Therefore, they are assumed to be unqualified and incompetent. They are compensated inequitably and are denied opportunities to develop their capabilities and to advance. They are micromanaged and disciplined unfairly.

All of the participants, except one, described experiences of feeling rejected by their co-workers and undermined by their supervisors. The theme of negative stereotyping, prejudicial remarks, and overt discriminatory actions predominated throughout these instances of exclusion.

Assimilation Individual differences are ignored, denied, or suppressed in the state of assimilation. Employees must assume the norms of the dominant culture, in order to be included

and to participate within the organization. Persons of color are labeled with negative stereotypes, regarding their race, culture, or gender. While at work, they minimize their cultural background, and persons of lighter complexion may attempt to "pass" as a member of the dominant culture. Persons of color feel that they have to exert greater effort in order to receive the same rewards as the other workers, and that they must have an advocate in order to progress professionally.

All of the participants reported feeling the pressure to assimilate and to conform to the norms of the dominant culture. Negative stereotyping and unfair treatment by management caused the participants to repress their full identity and to maintain a cautious stance.

Tolerance Individual differences are acknowledged and may be expressed in the state of tolerance. This is a neutral position, in that the differences are viewed neither negatively or positively; however, diversity is not valued. Persons of color are racially or ethnically categorized, and their identity is limited within those boundaries. They are assigned roles within the organization based on their identification as a diverse person. Interactions between persons of color and the workers of the dominant culture is formal. Persons of color are able to form networks with others who have similar racioethnic backgrounds and to have mentoring relationships which facilitate their professional development.

Instances of tolerance were less evident in the participants' accounts. Perhaps the emotional neutrality of that state resulted in those experiences being less noticeable. The perceptions of being tolerated were conveyed mostly through stereotypic remarks in which the participants' identities were categorized by racioethnic stereotypes, and their work was often determined within those bounds.

Acceptance The distinctions between diverse groups are blurred in the state of acceptance, and effective relationships are formed. At this point, persons of color and their co-workers communicate openly, directly, and respectfully, and they make efforts to improve intercultural understanding. The positive interactions are instrumental in the accomplishment of personal, team, and organizational goals. Informal and formal mentoring relationships are formed to enhance the career development of all workers.

Participants noticed with gratitude and enthusiasm those instances when they felt accepted. Their everyday interactions with their co-workers and supervisors, were instrumental in building open and trusting relationships. Unfortunately those instances of inclusion occurred far less frequently than those of tolerance, assimilation, and exclusion.

Appreciation All workers are valued for their individual contributions in the state of appreciation. Differences are considered to be beneficial to the organization's creativity, adaptability, and quality. Persons of color and their co-workers make mutual adaptations and interact freely across departments, functions, and job levels to meet organizational goals. Management recognizes and rewards individuals and teams for their accomplishments.

Since this state is the highest level of development within an organization, the participants seldom reported feeling appreciated for their contributions. The participants valued those occasions when their supervisors recognized and appreciated their work accomplishments.

Facilitators to Inclusion: The Participants' Perspectives

Although the participants were not asked directly to offer recommendations, their written and spoken words provided indications about what endeavors within their organizations facilitated positive work experiences and enhanced their professional commitment. The participants' comments revealed the significance of various corporate initiatives, and how those efforts have impacted their daily work lives. Their perspectives are grouped into four general areas which the participants found to be particularly helpful.

Mentoring Mentoring, both informal and formal, was mentioned frequently by the participants to be an important factor in their career advancement. They valued having someone ahead of them within the organizational hierarchy who would serve as a role model, advocate, and protector. The participants' needs ranged from job security, to vocational development, to career advancement. In all cases, the participants expressed feeling vulnerable, as members of

underrepresented groups, as well as lacking clout and savvy to navigate through organizational politics.

Employee Networks The participants also spoke positively about the presence of networks for persons of color within their work settings. Within those groups they found emotional support, affirmation for their worldview, and relief from the pressures to assimilate. Out of that base of security, the participants were more able to cope with the everyday stressors from being a distinct minority within the dominant culture.

Culturally-Sensitive Supervisors and Managers The participants' isolation was either heightened or reduced by the level of multiculturalism within the management structure. Some felt a gap between their own cultural norms and those of the organization. A few appreciated the unusual opportunity of having a manager who was of the same racioethnic heritage. Other participants expressed appreciation for their managers' sensitivity to work and family balance and their openness to flexi-scheduling.

Diversity Programs All of the corporations within the study had implemented diversity programs, which included cultural awareness and sensitivity training, as well as career development programs, such as the Glass Ceiling Initiative. Formative evaluations of those corporate efforts can be made by listening to the participants' perspectives about how the dynamics of their work environments had been affected, and whether their potential for advancement had improved.

The most common criticisms of the diversity initiatives were that the effort was limited in scope and had minimal impact on employee attitudes; that the supervisors did not reinforce the principles of diversity within the work group; and that upper management was not visibly supportive of the effort. In some instances, the corporate diversity efforts had surfaced sensitive issues, but did not provide the training and support needed to resolve worksite conflicts.

Recommendations for Corporate Change

The journey to multiculturalism is pervasive, continual, and profound. The following recommendations are grounded in the philosophy that multiculturalism is integral to all processes of the organization, such as human resource management, administrative functions, and product development and delivery. Secondly, the recommendations address transformational change on the individual, group, and organizational levels. Finally, multiculturalism encompasses the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral domains of all persons within the corporate community.

The thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of the participants in this study have provided the foundation for these recommendations. The meanings of their experiences, as women of color, explicate the organizational barriers and facilitators to their ability to perform optimally. Through the lens of their diversity, the following recommendations are offered.

Transformation Is Envisioned, Directed, and Enforced by Senior Management The leaders must understand that diversity is both a business and an ethical issue. They must ensure its integration into the organization's mission, values, and all aspects of strategic planning. An audit of the organizational culture must be conducted to examine its level of inclusivity and responsiveness to individual needs and lifestyles and to determine necessary changes in the corporate structure and processes. Diverse groups must have equitable access to resources and opportunities, so that diversity is reflected on all organizational levels. Senior management is responsible for enforcement of the standards of multiculturalism, and for rewarding employees accordingly.

Stereotyping, Prejudicial Attitudes, and Discriminatory Behaviors are Reduced Cultural awareness education must be provided throughout the workforce to raise the level of consciousness and sensitivity to individual differences, and to facilitate an inclusive corporate environment. Diversity goals must be determined, inclusive behavioral norms established, and all employees throughout the organization must be held accountable to those standards.

Interpersonal-Intergroup Dynamics are Improved The interactions within and between work groups must be monitored to ensure respectful and equitable treatment of all persons.

Particular attention must be paid to informal and formal communications, conflict mediation, and decision making processes. Employees must be provided training opportunities to improve their interpersonal skills and to facilitate teambuilding. Persons from underrepresented groups must have opportunities to participate in employee networks and to form supportive mentoring relationships.

Professional Development of Supervisors and Managers is Promoted Managers are responsible for the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. Persons of color rely on the ability of their immediate supervisors to provide support, intervention, protection, and leadership. Therefore, supervisors and managers must be provided comprehensive training in all aspects of employee management, such as hiring, orientation, supervision, training and career development, within the context of multiculturalism.

The Value of the Study

Diversity within corporations has become increasingly important in terms of organizational performance and vitality. However, movement from monoculturalism to multiculturalism is difficult, costly, and tenuous. Most companies have already implemented programs to accomplish that transformation, yet the evaluation of the results is often incomplete, and the long-term outcomes are yet to be determined.

This study has the potential of offering valuable information to individuals who are members of the working community, to the academic community who are interested in organization development, and to practitioners who hold responsibilities in human resources, supervision, and management. This process of listening, reflection, and interpretation has provided in-depth understanding about the lifeworld of women of color within their corporate environments. Their perspectives offer the corporate community the opportunity to effect significant and effective changes which will impact the performance of the entire organization.

In their own words, the participants have described the issues which are of greatest concern to them and which impact their work performance. One participant, who had been an EEO investigator, shared the wisdom of her experiences and lifeworld:

You fix one problem, you think that you got it locked up, and suddenly the phone rings, and you are back in the same place that you were the day before It was discouraging, because you realize that we still have so far to go I mean this stuff is very institutionalized Trying to fight racism takes . . . more than an office of EEO and Diversity We have got to engage everyone in this process. Because, if we don't have more people working towards changing . . . it's never going to happen. (Asa)

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